

Something *better* for Cape Breton



FOR TOO LONG, THE LIBERAL GOVERNMENT HAS IGNORED THE NEEDS OF CAPE BRETON.

They have stood by while **1 in 3 children** are living in poverty, emergency room closures continue to grow, and more than **8,000 people** and counting are on the waitlist for a family doctor.

Cape Breton deserves better. Cape Bretoners deserve something better than a Liberal government that closes hospitals, cuts funding to long-term care, and refuses to invest in transportation infrastructure in Cape Breton.

The NDP has a plan to invest in Cape Breton that is based on the real needs of people on the Island. Cape Breton is strong. But it needs a government that is going to stand up for what it needs.



HEALTH CARE

There is a significant shortage of family physicians, specialists, psychiatrists and other health care workers in Cape Breton. Stories of doctors leaving Cape Breton are more and more common. Emergency room closures in Cape Breton have increased every year since the Liberals have been in power, jumping again by 30 percent in 2019-2020. Death rates at Cape Breton hospitals are amongst the highest in the country.

In response to this concerning reality, the Liberals have committed to closing two community hospitals - the New Waterford Consolidated Hospital, and the Northside General. Removing emergency and hospital services from communities in Cape Breton is poised to make the health crisis worse.

THE NDP IS COMMITTED TO:

- **Listening to health care workers, doctors, and community members** in Cape Breton about what is needed in the health care system.
- **Creating a health strategy for Cape Breton** managed and led by health care workers and community members in Cape Breton to address the disparity in health outcomes between Cape Breton and the rest of the province. This would include reporting regularly on progress.
- **Keeping in-patient and emergency health care in New Waterford and North Sydney** to ensure people have care close to home and to relieve pressure on the Regional.

LONG-TERM CARE

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the cracks in our long-term care system and investment in new beds in Cape Breton is badly needed. At any given time there are dozens, if not hundreds, of people waiting for placement in long-term care in Cape Breton. But the Liberals have opened a total of 13 new long-term care beds on the Island since they formed government. The Liberals spend millions of dollars each year housing people in hospital beds in Cape Breton who should be in long-term care instead.

There is a deficit of as many as 400 beds in Cape Breton. The NDP will build them.

THE NDP IS COMMITTED TO:

- **Building a long-term care bed for every person in Cape Breton who needs one.**
- **Investing \$1.4 million per year to improve staffing in long-term care in Cape Breton** and bring care standards in line with what industry experts recommend.

Total investment:

\$27 million in capital expenses;
\$1.4 million in annual operating costs



MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Our public mental health system has been neglected by the Liberal government for too long. We need a system that recognizes that mental health is just as important as physical health.

Mental health wait times are particularly acute in Cape Breton. Most people in Industrial Cape Breton will wait longer than three months for their first non-urgent mental health care appointment. Wait times for children and adolescents are even longer. On top of that, the province's second largest municipality does not have a mental health crisis response service except for the police. Cape Bretoners deserve better.

THE NDP IS COMMITTED TO:

- **Funding mental health services in Cape Breton to the World Health Organization's recommended 10 percent of the health budget.** This would mean increasing the

mental health budget in Cape Breton by \$13.8 million in 2023, up to \$24.2 million in 2025, and finally to \$35.3 million by 2027.

• **This path allows for:**

- New walk-in mental health clinics in Cape Breton. Clinics will offer same-day/next-day mental health treatment services, as well as other programming that is appropriate to the community, developed together with communities, with an emphasis on drop-in services.
- Mobile mental health crisis teams that can respond to mental health emergencies in person in Cape Breton. Currently, in-person, mobile mental health crisis response is only available in the Halifax.

Total investment:

\$35.3 in annual operating funding by 2027





FAIRNESS FOR THE CAPE BRETON REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

People know the Cape Breton Regional Municipality needs more support. The population decline of the region has had a major impact on our province's second-largest municipality. CBRM's tax rates are now much higher than HRM's tax rates, and Cape Bretoners receive lower levels of services despite the higher taxes. The situation is not sustainable.

The NDP believes that people should be able to expect equitable services for comparable tax rates. An NDP government will act as a partner to the CBRM in addressing the region's problems. The NDP knows that for Nova Scotia to be successful, CBRM needs to be successful.

THE NDP IS COMMITTED TO:

- **Investing \$50 million per year for three years direct economic stimulus funding to the CBRM** to provide the resources required for the CBRM to become more sustainable.
- **Working to stabilize the population of CBRM.**
- **Funding the design and build study for a new library in CBRM** and investing the province's share of the cost of building it.
- **Considering a public option to maintain the Cape Breton railway** and support the Port of Sydney.

Total investment:

\$50 million stimulus funding for three years
\$3.2 million in one-time funding

ENDING POVERTY IN CAPE BRETON

Cape Bretoners should be able to expect to live in a place where everyone can afford the basics -- food, shelter, utilities. More than one in three children live in poverty in Cape Breton, and children make up 30 percent of people accessing food banks in the province.

The NDP believes that all Cape Bretoners can have a good quality of life. By increasing wages and social assistance benefits, access to affordable housing, child care, and universal programs and services that lower the bills we all pay -- we can eliminate poverty in Cape Breton.

THE NDP IS COMMITTED TO:

- **Introducing a \$15 minimum wage** and getting Nova Scotia on the road to a living wage to make sure working people can afford to live.
- **Increasing income assistance rates to get people out of poverty.**
- **Lowering everyone's bills** by limiting rent increases with permanent rent control, tackling energy poverty, and establishing a universal school food program.



HOUSING

The housing crunch is not unique to Halifax. Both in CBRM and across Cape Breton people are feeling the pressure of an overheated housing market and rising rents. Estimates of the number of people experiencing homelessness in CBRM are as high as 284.

An NDP government will build housing in Cape Breton, and be a partner to the CBRM and all others working towards adequate and affordable housing on the island.

THE NDP IS COMMITTED TO:

- **\$31.7 million capital investment over 4 years to build 200 new, non-market affordable housing units in Cape Breton.**
- **\$4 million per year for sustainable, multi-year funding for non-profit housing organizations** for housing first programs, housing support and eviction prevention in Cape Breton.

Total investment:

\$31.7 million in capital funds

\$4 million in annual operating costs



CHILD CARE

The COVID-19 pandemic has reconfirmed that child care is a foundational piece of our communities and economies but it is inaccessible for too many families in Cape Breton.

Aside from some parts of Sydney, Cape Breton is a child care desert in that child care spaces are only available for a small percentage of children. An NDP government will make sure that families have access to affordable child care in Cape Breton.

THE NDP IS COMMITTED TO:

- **Reducing child care costs by half in the first year, in partnership with the federal government.**
- **Eliminating fees for school-based before and after school care for families in Cape Breton.**
- **Investing in Cape Breton schools** to make improvements to accommodate increased enrollment in before and after school programs.
- **Piloting \$10/day child care at 10 sites in Cape Breton.**
- **Building a new, publicly-owned licensed child care centre in the CBRM.**

Total investment:

\$2.2 million in capital funds

\$8 million in annual operating costs

GREEN JOBS

The NDP knows that we must act now if we want to protect our province from the devastating impacts of climate change. Cape Breton's communities are at the forefront of the impacts as well as the fight to address climate change.

An NDP government will tackle the climate crisis while supporting workers and creating new, green jobs in Cape Breton.

THE NDP IS COMMITTED TO:

- **Supporting municipalities in Cape Breton to create renewable Community Power Plans and invest in climate change mitigation.**
- **Creating a new local school food program** that would help address poverty, create jobs, and support local food producers.
- **Piloting deep retrofits of public housing in Cape Breton** to establish models for making public and private buildings more energy efficient.
- **Ensuring no job losses for Nova Scotia Power workers in Cape Breton.**
- **Investing in community-led programs to train people in Cape Breton for the jobs that are created by addressing climate change** - including free NSCC or university tuition and dedicated training streams for energy efficiency and renewable workforces.

Total investment:

\$2 million in capital funds in the first year

\$7.1 million in annual operating costs

“It’s deep inside all of us: the hunger for a home.

For an affordable apartment, a down-payment to get started, a place to call your own.
And a community wrapped around you – with health care, child care, and schools.
It’s not too much to hope for. It’s what everyone deserves.

And we can get there – but we’ve got to have a government that puts people’s real
lives front and centre.

It’s time for something better, because Nova Scotia is our home.”

————— Gary Burrill, NDP Leader

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